

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 LONDON 04303 01 OF 02 171516Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----026989 171537Z /43

O P 171441Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4245
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA PRIORITY
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 04303

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: XF UNSC PBOR PEPR IS LE UK
SUBJECT: PROPOSED UNSC ACTION ON MIDDLE EAST AND
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UK PARTICIPATION

REF: STATE 68560

1. WE CARRIED OUT INSTRUCTION WITH TOMKYS IN FCO.
BRITISH HAVE ALREADY GONE TO BAT WITH THE ISRAELIS,
AND FCO NOTES WITH INTEREST THAT DAYAN HAS "DISASSO-
CIATED HIMSELF" FROM THE CURRENT ISRAELI MOVE. FCO
OFFICERS HANDLING THE PROBLEM ARE PARTICIPATING IN
SERIES OF MEETINGS IN WHICH BRITISH POSITION IS

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PAGE 02 LONDON 04303 01 OF 02 171516Z

EVOLVING FROM HOUR TO HOUR. HOWEVER, AS OF LATE
MORNING MARCH 17 TOMKYS GAVE EMBOFF FOLLOWING STATUS
REPORT:

A) OWEN'S PRESENT INSTINCT IS TO TAKE A LEADING
ROLE IN SPONSORING THE RESOLUTION, SUBJECT TO WHAT-
EVER INHIBITIONS UK ROLE AS PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY

COUNCIL MAY IMPOSE.

B) UK THINKING IS CLOSE TO THAT OF THE US.

C) PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF OWEN'S PERSONAL INTEREST IN PEACE-KEEPING ARRANGEMENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST, FCO IS THINKING IN TERMS OF OFFERING A BRITISH CONTINGENT TO ANY UN PEACEKEEPING FORCE TO BE SET UP. HOWEVER, FCO HAS NOT YET RPT NOT YET DISCUSSED THIS PROPOSAL WITH UK MINISTRY OF DEFENSE. FCO UNDERSTANDS URQUHART IN UN IS THINKING IN TERMS OF A FORCE OF BETWEEN 12,000 AND 15,000.

2. COMMENT: UK IS ONE OF THE FEW WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES NOT REPRESENTED IN UNTSO. THIS ANACHRONISM HAS A HISTORY-BASED REASON WHICH HAS LOST ITS VALIDITY: WHEN UNTSO WAS FIRST SET UP IN 1948, BRITAIN WAS THE OUTGOING MANDATORY POWER AND THEREFORE BY COMMON CONSENT THE BRITISH PROVIDED NO PERSONNEL TO UNTSO EVEN AFTER IT EXPANDED. THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE ALREADY HAS AN INKLING OF OWEN'S INCLINATION TO VOLUNTEER BRITISH OBSERVERS AS THE RESULT OF A CASUAL UNCLEARED REMARK BY OWEN TO A BBC REPORTER AT THE CONCLUSION OF HIS RECENT VISIT TO ISRAEL; HOWEVER, THE MOD'S FIRST REACTION TO A FORMAL FCO PROPOSAL MAY BE GROANS IN VIEW OF THE CURRENT OTHER DEMANDS ON BRITISH
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PAGE 03 LONDON 04303 01 OF 02 171516Z

MILITARY PERSONNEL AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES.

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PAGE 01 LONDON 04303 02 OF 02 171516Z
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S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 04303

EXDIS

3. AS SEEN FROM LONDON, THIS WOULD BE A GOOD TIME FOR THE USG TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OWEN'S OWN INCLINATIONS AND PROPOSE THAT THE BRITISH CONTRIBUTE MILITARY PERSONNEL TO UNTSO AND THE PROPOSED PEACE-KEEPING OPERATION IN SOUTH LEBANON. HERETOFORE IN PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS WE HAVE TENDED TO RELY RATHER HEAVILY FOR CONTINGENTS ON AFRICAN AND ASIAN NATIONS. HOWEVER, THIS HAS PLACED A DISPROPORTIONATELY HEAVIER STRAIN ON THE LATTERS' OFTEN LIMITED MILITARY PERSONNEL RESOURCES, PARTICULARLY LINGUISTICALLY QUALIFIED OFFICERS. THE BRITISH OBVIOUSLY WOULD BE IN A MUCH BETTER POSITION TO SUPPLY THEM, AND THE BRITISH STILL
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PAGE 02 LONDON 04303 02 OF 02 171516Z

HAVE A GREAT DEAL OF EXPERTISE ON THE MIDDLE EAST AS WELL AS ON MODERN METHODS OF PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS.

4. THE ONLY OBJECTION TO ASKING THE BRITISH TO PARTICIPATE THAT WE CAN THINK OF IS THAT IT MIGHT STIMULATE SOVIET DEMANDS TO PARTICIPATE. HOWEVER, WE HAVE ALREADY HAD TO GIVE UP OUR POSITION ON KEEPING THE SOVIETS OUT OF SUCH OPERATIONS WHEN WE AGREED TO RUSSIANS IN UNTSO AND POLES IN UNEF IN 1973.

5. THE DEPT WILL RECALL THAT NEA AND SSM OFFICERS THROUGHOUT 1977 WERE CONDUCTING TECHNICAL EXCHANGES WITH THE BRITISH ON THE MECHANICS OF PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS IN THE AREA. A CULMINATING FRUITION OF THESE PROFITABLE EXCHANGES WOULD BE TO SEEK ACTIVE BRITISH PARTICIPATION IN THE FIELD NOW. IF THE DEPARTMENT AGREES, WE SHOULD MOVE FAST WHILE THE SITU-

ATION IS STILL CRYSTALIZING.

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